


Braille Monitor



NOVEMBER, 1982

VOICE OF THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND



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THE BRAILLE MONITOR

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NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND

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THE BRAILLE MONITOR

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* * *

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* * *

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* * *

THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND IS NOT AN ORGANIZATION
SPEAKING FOR THE BLIND—IT IS THE BLIND SPEAKING FOR THEMSELVES

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IN THIS ISSUE

The last two issues of the *Monitor* were largely taken up with matters concerning the national convention in Minneapolis this summer. The same emphasis is continued in the present issue. Almost every item presented at the convention was of unusual significance, but the program taken as a whole was a landmark. It was a call to action and a blueprint for the future. There is general agreement that this was the best, the most harmonious, the most informative, and the most productive convention we have ever had. It is fitting that we should present in as much detail as possible the program items and that we try

to capture the spirit as well.

Even so, we cannot hope to print every address or cover each point of discussion. There was too much. It was too varied. What we are trying to do is capture the essence of it all, to print enough items in enough detail to give those who were not present a sense of what happened and to establish a record for present study and future memory. The fact that a given item is printed and another omitted is not meant to exalt the one or diminish the other. The convention would have been less dynamic and less vital if a single part of it had failed to occur.

CIVIL RIGHTS: CHANGES IN GUIDELINES,
ENFORCEMENT, AND PROSPECTS

by Congressman Peter Rodino
Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary
United States House of Representatives

An important item on the agenda Tuesday afternoon, July 6, was an address delivered by the Honorable Peter Rodino, Congressman from New Jersey and Chairman of the Judiciary Committee of the United States House of Representatives. Congressman Rodino received an enthusiastic welcome from Federationists. He spoke in part as follows:

"The President of the New Jersey chapter of the Federation of the Blind, Jim Sofka, is my newly acquired constituent. You can see how devoted I am to my

constituents since I came all the way from the 10th District of New Jersey (Newark) to be here in Minnesota with Jim and you this afternoon. Mr. Jim Gashel, your Director of Governmental Affairs, I want to thank for his valuable assistance. My staff in Washington has learned not only to respect the kind of dedication and commitment that Jim has to this great organization but is grateful for his valuable assistance as well. Let me say at the very outset, Dr. Jernigan, that I never want to have you for an opponent. I want to

applaud and salute you for your very, very valuable efforts on behalf of the blind and other handicapped people.

"I know that one of the Federation's chief concerns today is the Reagan Administration's apparent plan to cut back drastically under the banner of deregulation on enforcement of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, one of our landmark civil rights laws. Sad to say, the draft 504 guidelines are but additional evidence of a broad and disturbing trend toward a weakening of the protection of guaranteed individual rights. This trend can be seen throughout the Administration as it backs away, not only from programs designed to give the blind an equal opportunity to get a job and an education but also from traditional enforcement policies in the whole arena of affirmative action to remedy job discrimination—in school desegregation until very late in the game, and voting rights. It can be seen in the Congress where determined legislative efforts are being made to strip the courts of jurisdiction over issues involving individual rights. Such proposals (to put it bluntly) would deny to the courts the power to enforce the law. These are proposals that I view as clearly unconstitutional, a view that is shared by other constitutional scholars.

"And this trend, my friends, can also be seen in the courts in some decisions that would make it virtually impossible for a plaintiff to prove civil rights violations and in some decisions that crank (would you believe it?) a cost factor into the protection of those rights. This latter development has been embraced enthusiastically by the Administration in its fervent determination to impose a cost-benefit analysis on government regulations, including the 504 draft guidelines. Personally, I find it hard to accept the principle that an individual's legal right to equality must depend on how much it costs to assure those rights.

Requirements imposed by regulations should not be unduly burdensome. This 'undue hardship' should be, rather, strictly defined, so that any course to provide reasonable accommodation could not be viewed as too burdensome. Still, it bothers me that a right can be said to exist only if providing for that right doesn't cost too much. How much is too much? What is the proper price tag on the guarantee of equal justice?

"That issue aside, my friends, the fact is that the protections against discrimination that your Federation seeks would commit no great cost, for you seek only integration into society solely on the basis of equal treatment. You seek only the chance to prove (like all who suffer discrimination) that you can fill and you do fill a productive role in society when given the chance. The changes the Administration is considering in the 504 guidelines have been called a blueprint for destruction of all vestiges of civil rights protection hard-won by the disabled community over the past 5 years. I see no need to make mischief with these regulations. However, a constructive revision might make clear that Section 504 applies to job discrimination and protects the right to private suits in such cases. . . .

"Your Federation played a vital role in the writing of the regulations now in force. Throughout your 42 years of existence, you have been in the vanguard in the hard-fought campaign to win full civil rights for disabled citizens. You have been militant, but at the same time reasonable and responsible. To my mind militancy does not preclude those other virtues. Your value in the courts and with government agencies and with all levels to establish and protect your civil rights has earned you the title 'the voice of the blind.' I can attest and many others can attest that the title is one well deserved. No less difficult has been the battle to break down stereotyped

(although, perhaps, benign) attitudes that have erected discouraging barriers to rights to equal employment, equal education, and equal justice. These attitudes may not be a manifestation of a mean spirit by the sighted world. They, instead, may be (as Dr. Jernigan has said) a product of pity, misunderstanding, or misplaced kindness. This may be discrimination of a different kind, but it is discrimination nonetheless. One of your objectives is to convince the world that blindness is not a tragedy but that with training and opportunity, it is only a nuisance. I cannot, of course, know what it is to be blind. But I do have some small idea of what a nuisance it is to have one's vision impaired. A few years back, I learned that I suffered from glaucoma. While I've learned to deal with the problem, I suspect that my request for bigger and bigger type for speech texts might be something of a nuisance to my staff.

"Above all, I learned the lesson that you teach. Don't feel sorry for yourself. Don't let your nuisance make you a nuisance to others."

Congressman Rodino then told an anecdote about Dr. Daniel Meador who served as an Assistant Attorney General in the Justice Department during the Carter Administration. While in this position, Dr. Meador became totally blind. *Monitor* readers will remember that Dr. Meador addressed the 1979 NFB Convention in Miami, Florida. He told us about his experiences after blindness as he continued in his position with the Justice Department.

Then, Congressman Rodino continued: "Well, Dan Meador's success story is only one of many. You've heard them. Blind people today excel in many crafts and professions. But I know you take scant comfort in that, for the sad reality is that a large and talented percentage of blind

people in America are denied jobs or are consigned to work that ignores their skill. Many toil in workshops for a fraction of the minimum wage. I support wholeheartedly the Federation's determined effort to gain for blind people the minimum wage, the meager wage other workers are now assured. It is terribly unjust and unbecoming that some of you are being forced to subsidize these workshops through subminimum pay. It is the responsibility of us all in the private sector or as public officials always to work to secure and protect the rights of *all*, no matter how small the minority group. In my 34 years in the Congress I've always tried to meet the solemn obligation, and I will continue to do so, and most certainly on this particular issue. My friends, there may be a place in our society for sheltered workshops, but there is none for sheltered sweatshops. I fully support the Federation's proposal to amend Title VII of the Civil Rights Act to include the handicapped. Title VII now prohibits all job discrimination on the basis of race, sex, religion, or national origin. It prescribes the remedies available to victims of such discrimination. These remedies include the right to go to court. The law should be extended to include the blind and the physically disabled. Today there is no prohibition that is generally applicable to job discrimination on the basis of handicap. True, Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act applies to the 300 contractors who benefit from our federal tax dollars. Even here, the Reagan Administration has backed off from President Carter's enforcement policy. The Labor Department has decreed that Section 503 does not give handicapped persons the right to file job discrimination suits against contractors. In addition, some courts have ruled that the handicapped have no right to private job discrimination suits against

recipients of federal aid under Section 504. Even with energetic enforcement and an expanded view of the law, these two sections will not provide full employment opportunities for all. These sections do not reach the 700,000 employers who receive no federal dollars or federal contracts, who get no federal assistance, who remain substantially free from requirements to avoid job discrimination against you. Amending Title VII, however, would take care of this gap in the law. Bills to amend Title VII have been introduced, as Dr. Jernigan pointed out, and they have many co-sponsors. I cannot say whether or not we will get a chance to amend it; I cannot say when; but this is a step that must be taken and taken rather soon. Only by this change will you gain true equality in the job market.

"In the meantime, we must try to assure that the new Section 504 guidelines do not undercut your rights and virtually eliminate your hard-won gains of the last five years. The Department of Justice will soon publish in the *Federal Register* its proposed guidelines. Analysis of the drafts of the proposed guidelines have shown there is sound reason for some concern. As drafted, the guidelines would use a cost-benefit analysis to reduce regulatory requirements. They would not cover job discrimination and could easily be evaded through false and unbinding statements not worth the paper they would be written on. The House Judiciary Committee has the responsibility of riding herd on Justice Department policies and practices.

"As chairman of that committee I meet regularly with the Deputy Attorney General to discuss issues of mutual concern. At our next meeting I want to assure you that I intend to ask the Attorney General about the guidelines. I want to know if the final version is substantially unchanged from earlier drafts. If that is the case, I intend to

tell him that they are unacceptable and I would feel duty-bound to have the Judiciary Committee immediately conduct hearings to challenge publicly the Administration's reasoning from both the standpoint of legality and fairness.

"I will be glad to extend to your very eloquent President an invitation to be present and to present testimony in support of our position.

"I am pleased to note, incidentally, that the Federation's proposal to require assistance for voters who are blind, disabled, or cannot read or write was included in the Voting Rights Act the President signed last week. And Senator Howard Metzenbaum led that fight." Congressman Rodino discussed his concern that job discrimination could not be eliminated from 504 guidelines and that the intent standard not be imposed on 504 complaints.

He continued: "Until we can amend Title VII to include the blind and the handicapped, we must work through 504 guidelines to make clear the law's reach. My friends, this year has been proclaimed as the National Year of the Disabled. This year you and I and all who believe in equal rights must press on with the march toward equality and opportunity for all. We must let the nation know, as your Dr. Jernigan said in an eloquent speech, 'We know who we are, and we shall never go back.'"

After Congressman Rodino finished his speech, Dr. Jernigan said: "Should you hold the hearing that you indicate may be held, we gratefully accept your invitation to present testimony and will do so . . . Congressman Rodino, we want to tell you that your coming here has been a real high-point of this convention. We will be talking to you in Washington. We will be calling on you for help in the matter of civil rights for blind persons. Most especially, we appreciate your reaffirmation of commitment to

try to help us secure the civil rights which all American citizens ought to have.”

SOCIAL SECURITY: EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE BLIND, LEGISLATIVE PROSPECTS, AND GENERAL OVERVIEW

by Paul B. Simmons

*Deputy Commissioner for External Affairs
Social Security Administration
Baltimore, Maryland*

In introducing Mr. Simmons to the 1982 NFB Convention Thursday afternoon, President Jernigan said: “The man who will present this item to us was here last year. He is Paul Simmons. He is the Deputy Commissioner for External Affairs of the Social Security Administration in Baltimore. Since last year’s convention, we have made a great deal of progress in dealing with the Social Security Administration. There are obviously things we’d like to see improved and changed. There are also things that *have* been improved and changed. To talk with us on the topic I mentioned is Mr. Simmons. Afterwards, we’ll have discussion from the audience.”

Mr. Simmons spoke as follows: “It was just about a year ago. This was my first major national group, and you are a major force in Washington. You’ve got a lot of good friends in the Congress and a lot of good friends on the outside trying to make sure your friends in the Congress know what you need.

“A lot has been happening in Social Security since we last met; but, unfortunately, nothing at all has been done in the Congress about the Social Security financing crisis that I talked to you about last year and that I want to talk to you about again today. We’re still in very real danger of going broke over the short term during

the next three to five years and over the long term during the rest of our working lives. How very real that problem is is coming back to haunt the Congress in October, three months from now, and just one month before the election. For the first time in the 47-year history of Social Security, we’re going to have to borrow billions of dollars in order to pay retirement and disability benefits in November. I’m sure you’ve been hearing a lot of scary facts and figures about the present and future financial state. Some of the facts and figures are going to be in what I have to say today. Let me tell you the bottom line of what we believe—the bottom line of what those facts and figures mean to you and to every other American citizen. First, it is true that we have a very real problem confronting us in the Social Security finance system. Don’t let anybody tell you we don’t. Secondly, because of that problem Congress and the American people are going to have to make some very difficult choices to solve it. Third and most importantly, as a matter of practical and political facts, there is no danger that any Administration or any Congress will ever let this most crucial program collapse and not keep its promise to you and to all other Americans. Fourth, no one now receiving retirement benefits has any reason to fear

that those benefits are going to stop or are going to decline. Future generations (most of us in this room) are going to have to make the choice, or Congress will have to do it for us—either to expect a little less out of the system when we get there or pay a lot more in taxes into it over all of our working lives. That's really what the facts of Social Security's life are right now in the great debate that's going on in Washington.

"One of the problems that the Congress is having in the great debate is that there is a lot of misconception out there about what the system is and what it isn't. A lot of those myths keep showing up in questions that we get almost everywhere. The first question that we get is the most obvious: What do you mean—the system's going broke? That's just politics. How come we never heard anyone talking like this before? The fact is, it's not a new problem. It's been there, and it's been growing worse (almost by the day) since the early 1970's. President Reagan is the third President in a row who has tried to get Congress to solve the problem once and for all. For the first thirty years of Social Security's history, up to 1970, we always had more than a year's worth of benefits in the trust funds. That meant the system could easily ignore little bumps and grinds in the economy. We always had a whole year's benefits on hand in case we needed them to pass them out. Today, after seven straight years of paying out far more than we're taking in, the biggest of the trust funds (the one that pays retirement, survivors, and disability benefits) is down to 15%, barely enough for 1½ month's benefits and scarcely enough to absorb anything less than an erratic pulse beat in the economy. All three trust funds combined (including the disability fund and the hospital insurance fund, which finances Medicare) stand today at about 22% or about 2½ month's worth of benefits. That's

all we've got in the bank to cushion us against the problems in cash flow. By the end of this year, the cash flow is going to take us down to 16%. But that's far too close to the bottom line for the health of the system and for the trust of the people. Right now at this very moment the biggest fund, the retirement and survivors fund, is spending \$30,000 more every minute than is coming in. The three funds combined are losing money at the rate of \$17,000 per minute. Thirty minutes from now all three funds will be down by half a million dollars. An hour from now it will be a million dollars. By this time tomorrow it'll be \$24,500,000 closer to a crisis. Those are the kind of figures that scare people. They should be scaring Congressmen, and I think they are. I think we're going to see action by the Congress this fall—which I'll get to in a minute. You don't have to be a math teacher or an economist to predict where numbers like that will take us.

"The second question is also an obvious one: What did you do with my money? I paid \$100,000 into that system, I want it all back. First, no one has ever paid anything like that into the system. That's one of the problems we have right now. A worker who started paying the maximum tax way back in 1937 and retired last year would have only paid about \$14,700 into the system. That worker will get about every penny of that back in about 19 months at today's benefit rates. If he or she has a spouse who never worked at all, the payback is probably already complete, because it only takes about 13 months. For tomorrow's worker—that's another story. A twenty-year-old average worker starting out today and paying the average tax over his or her lifetime will probably pay more than \$330,000.00 into the system. When and if that worker is going to get that back is really what they're talking about right now in Washington. We have to think about that

future generation of workers. Nobody gets any money back unless there are enough workers on the job right now paying money in to be sure there is money in there. It's as simple as that. Social Security is a pay-as-you-go system. Today's worker's taxes are turned right around and paid out to today's beneficiaries. That's the way it's always been, and that's the way it is right now, especially when we have so little left in the bank.

"The third question: What's all this about slowing down the future growth in benefits? Congress has never cut benefits before. Besides, Social Security has guaranteed to keep me at a middle-level income when I retire. That's not true on both counts. First, it's not true that Social Security was ever intended to insure that every worker would get a guaranteed middle-level income at retirement. For the first thirty years of the program (up until 1970) the so-called wage replacement ratio (that's the percentage you get back as a percentage of your last year of salary) was always set at somewhere around thirty to thirty-three percent for the average worker. For the low income worker it was a little higher. If a worker wanted to have more than one-third of preretirement wages, he was expected to put it together through private pensions, personal savings, or whatever you could do during your working lifetime to provide for your own future. That's what Congress always intended. That's the way the system was always intended to work. Then, in the 1970's things got out of hand, and Congress expanded the benefit structure without expanding the tax base to pay for it to the point where we got the system all the way up to a wage replacement ratio close to 56%. That was to be in effect this year before Congress acted in 1977 to cut it down.

"In 1977 Congress did two things. The

Congress and the President agreed to the largest single tax hike in peacetime history—the Social Security tax hike—which we were then assured would keep Social Security sound well into the 21st century. Second, (and all too few realized this at the time) the 1977 Congress also cut future benefits for future beneficiaries by almost 25% in order to help make up the growing gap. Very few noticed the cut then because all the focus was on the tax hike. But now people are beginning to notice it, especially people who were born in 1917 and after and began to retire last year. For the worker born in 1917 living next to one born in 1916, the difference can be more than \$130.00 a month, and that's just the beginning. By the end of this decade when the end of the 1977 cut is fully phased in, the so-called wage replacement ratio established in the 1977 law, will be down to about 42%, or 25% below the high of 56% that it was heading for before Congress acted. This is not to say that what Congress did in 1977 was a bad thing. It is to say that Congress has, indeed, made some very tough decisions in the past to ensure the future of the system. In fact, in 1977 the Congress took far more drastic steps in both raising taxes and cutting future benefits than any further steps that will be needed to ensure the long range solvency of the system.

"The fourth question we always get—if Social Security is in such bad shape, how come you're using Social Security funds to pay for welfare and guns and tanks and space shuttles? Well, we're not. We never have. We never will. Every penny of the payroll tax goes back out in payments to retirees, to survivors, and to the disabled. That's it. No tanks, no guns, no space shuttles. We don't even buy butter with it.

"The fifth question—how come you're paying crooks and murderers in jail if you're in such bad shape. Well, we're not.

We used to. We used to pay murderers, for example. That happened because when Congress opened up the program in the '60's and the '70's, it went a little too far and it made a loophole for some creep who got caught killing somebody to plead disability on account of insanity and qualified for Social Security all the time he sat in jail. Congress figured that out in 1980, but that left it on the books for more than fifteen years. That says a lot about how the program has been allowed to slide away over the years from where it was intended to be going in the first place.

"These are the myths that we've got to dispel if we're going to have a rational national debate on the present course and the future directions of Social Security that we've got to have if we're to have any Social Security system at all. There is no domestic issue that is more crucial to all of us than Social Security. There's probably no other issue that's more misunderstood than the Social Security financing problem. And no single problem is obviously more important for all of us to understand. It directly touches more than 150 million Americans now—116 million of us paying our hard earned tax dollars into the system, and 36 million as beneficiaries receiving the benefits that we've spent a lifetime working for. It's a quarter of the national budget. Its solvency has got to be number one in our national domestic priorities. It has got to be above and beyond partisan politics. If it took Presidents and members of both parties to get us in the mess we're in today, then it's going to take members of both parties to get us out tomorrow. To resolve those problems is going to take bipartisan boldness, even bravery, the kind of bipartisan action we can only achieve if the people whose lives are touched by Social Security (and that's all of us) understand how very real its problems are and how very tough it's going to be to fix it.

"The stage that we're now on for the great debate is at the National Commission on Social Security Reform in Washington whose members have been appointed by the President and the leaders of both houses of the Congress. The commission is under a mandate to look over all of the problems, the issues, and the options and to recommend to the nation what action should be taken. Their deadline is pretty well set by the Congress and the President as being the end of this year. That's a deadline reinforced by the Congressional action late last year to limit our borrowing authority to keep the system alive only until June of 1983. If the Congress hasn't acted by the spring of 1983, then the checks are going to start to slow down in July. Now that's a cold, hard fact, and nothing short of a miraculous boom in our economy can even make a dent in it. Even a boom right now wouldn't do it—we're going to be so short in the next three or four years. Indeed, there are going to be very few arguments in Washington in the coming months over the facts of the crisis. The arguments, rather, are going to focus on what to do about those facts. In recommending what to do, the commission and ultimately the Congress will have literally hundreds of options on the table to pick and choose among."

Mr. Simmons discussed in general terms the possibility of raising taxes, dipping into the general funds of the country for Social Security benefits, and of cutting benefits. He then turned to another matter.

"Before I go to questions. I'd like to catch up on a little unfinished business that you and I had a year ago at your last convention. At that time I had just come into Social Security and discovered that for years and years and years we had a long-standing policy in Social Security of pulling the career ladder out from under blind employees on their way up in the agency.

Well, I talked to Commissioner Svahn about that before coming to your convention. I promised then, and he has delivered on that promise. As of now we are encouraging blind Claims Representatives to pass the grade ten barrier on their way up in the organization. We have thirteen hundred offices around the country and 86,000 people, and it's hard to get numbers together. But I'm told that so far we already have nine who are at the grade ten level, and there are a lot more who have been trained or are about to be trained and are in line for promotion. I found out this morning that there are three right here in the two Minneapolis-St. Paul offices. I think that's a big accomplishment on our part after all those years of foot dragging. We're also taking steps to make sure (through our personnel and training people) that we don't have any other barriers standing in the way of blind employees.

"I found one of those barriers myself in New Orleans when I was there making a speech in a local office. I found a blind employee there who had a Visualtek system which had been bought for him by a rehab agency (I believe) in the state of Texas. Now he was in New Orleans. He couldn't afford to keep it repaired, and it was getting in bad shape. He couldn't afford to buy some add-on equipment. I asked his supervisor: What's the matter? She said: We don't really have a policy. We have a Catch-22. We can't fix it for him if we don't own it. We can't buy it from him because we don't have any money, and besides we don't have any policy to do that. Well, now we do have such a policy. And we have a person who has been assigned full-time to make sure that that policy works. We have a policy under which an employee can donate equipment to SSA, and then we'll pay all costs to maintain it or repair it. Or we'll buy it, and

then we'll fix it and keep the thing running and keep the employee working. To make sure that there is money available, we've set aside \$600,000.00 this year alone to pay for special equipment for the blind. We're using some of that money to test the new technology that's being developed almost day by day, and we're counting on our new computer system on which we're going to spend almost half a billion dollars in order to bring us up into the twentieth century to plug into some of that equipment in years to come and make it even easier for a blind claims rep or a blind claims authorizer or supervisor to do his or her job.

"Since your last convention we've also been working to find the best way to make sure that all the people in our district offices who are dealing with beneficiaries and with claimants have instant access to all of the special provisions in all of our programs that affect the blind. Strangely enough there are many complex provisions, and no one in the past in the agency had ever thought of putting them all together in one place where a Claims Representative could immediately look for whatever he or she needed to know. Now we're making good on the promise to consolidate all that material into one section in our manuals, and we hope to get it out within weeks to everyone of our 1,350 local offices. It's been a long hard fight to get it but we're getting it. Finally, we're also taking steps to make sure that our own blind employees are not shut out of contact with the very agency and the very people they work for and work with. That's why we are now producing several of our internal publications (including our broadest based employee oriented publication) in cassette tape versions. Everybody can enjoy them and learn what's going on."

Mr. Simmons concluded his speech with the remark that he had recently been

informed that twenty blind persons will begin training for employment in the Social Security Administration this summer. Then, a number of questions were raised by individuals in the audience.

Dick Porter said: "You have been to two of our conventions, and you are aware that the biggest problem that blind people have is attitudinal. I hope that Mr. Jim Jeffers will give you a copy of the letter that I sent to him. I know that there are things that Congress must handle (appropriations, etc. . . .), but there are things that you as one of the Deputy Commissioners can deal with very directly. Mr. Jeffers came to the Governor's Conference on Disabled Persons in West Virginia and made the condescending statement that there are things that one must have to be an attorney, an accountant, or a bench mechanic. One must have sight. One must have hands, one must have a mind, but one does not need legs. Sir, this kind of attitude in an agency must change. You can deal with that. That is condescension and patronization in the worst form. These, I think, are the things that you can deal with. Let Congress take care of the money. Will you deal with your subordinates?"

Dr. Jernigan followed up by saying: "I believe you are aware of the fact that we have had some problems attitudinally with the man he mentions—when he was in Illinois and when he was in rehabilitation. The Social Security Administration saw fit to hire him politically. That's fine, I understand the necessity of politics. We feel that regarding the treatment of blind people we ought to expect from this Administration (and very often have got it through the Social Security Administration) first-class treatment as human beings. We feel that in this particular instance and through this individual we sometimes do not."

Mr. Simmons said: "I am not acquainted with the context of the state-

ment, and I'm not about to comment on something like that in a public forum. I will say this: I'm a firm believer that actions speak a lot louder than words. I think the actions that we have taken in Social Security on behalf of our own employees and on behalf of our own beneficiaries speak very eloquently to the kind of spirit that we hope reaches every corner of that Administration. It is a big agency. We have 1,350 offices out there and 86,000 different personalities who are staffing those offices. I am sure you can find among them people that you won't agree with, or who will be defensive, but I'm also sure that you're going to find at the bottom line some very good people trying very hard to be fair and effective on your behalf."

Dr. Jernigan added: "Of course, you're not going to comment on that, not knowing the context of it. I wouldn't expect you to. It would be very nearly irresponsible if you did. In fact, we wouldn't like it if you did. Having said all that, this is not just anybody in one of 1,300 offices. This is one of your top political appointees. We feel an injustice was done. We don't want to pursue it further here. Dick Porter is our West Virginia President. Before you leave, I would ask that you get from him the details and the data. If, indeed, after you look into it, you find that an injustice was done—then, I hope that you will try to take steps to see that it is remedied. If you find there wasn't one that's something else. Words sometimes speak louder than actions because they betoken action. You could have the best civil rights program in the world, and if you got out as a former Secretary of Agriculture did and referred to the 'niggers,' it wouldn't make any difference what else you did. You would have blacks all over you for it. What we're saying is: Here's something we think ought to be looked into. All I'm asking you to do is to look into what we believe is a problem and

to find out the facts about it. We think it's that consequential. Is that reasonable?"

Mr. Simmons answered: "Yes, sir."

Steve Benson raised the next question: "I also want to talk with Mr. Simmons about Jim Jeffers. From 1976 on I served as a member of the Governing Board of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation in Illinois. That Board hired Mr. Jeffers to direct the Division and, subsequently, the Department of Rehabilitation Services. Throughout his tenure he was supportive of an outfit called the National Accreditation Council for Agencies Serving the Blind and Visually Handicapped (NAC) which (we believe) advocates against blind people in every respect. It is my understanding that Mr. Jeffers now sits on the NAC Board. I would like you to take steps to remedy that situation. Since Mr. Jeffers is in a position where he influences the expenditure of federal funds which impact on the lives of blind people, then his position on NAC is inappropriate, and I think that it's a conflict of interest. Will you take steps to remedy that? And will you report to us what steps you take?"

Mr. Simmons answered: "I don't even belong to Rotary myself. I will look into it. I don't think this is the forum for this kind of a problem. If you have a problem, I would like to have some evidence of it. I don't want to get into commenting on individual things like this."

Dr. Jernigan said: "I don't want you to comment, but I want to tell you something. The National Accreditation Council for Agencies Serving the Blind and Visually Handicapped (NAC) is not simply personalities, and it is not a minor matter. This is one of the biggest threats to blind people in this country. (applause) If one of your top officials sits on that Board, which is attacking blind people constantly, that is a political matter, and it is of this much importance to us. We feel the same way about it

that we would if one of your top political officials sat on the board of the Ku Klux Klan, and you were in the midst of an NAACP convention. It is that important. (applause) You may do whatever else you do, and you may talk about what the average worker pays—3 to 1, 16 to 1, or something else. I don't know that we can save the world or stop the nuclear holocaust or remedy all the diseases of the corn crop or do lots of other things, but I can tell you this: Where blind people are concerned, if we are to continue to have a good relationship with Social Security and this Administration, you can't have one of the top political appointees of that Administration sitting on the board of an agency which has declared and avowed its purpose of destroying this organization. (applause and cheers) I'm going to let it go at that except to say to you that what we ask of you (and believe from your past performance that you will do if you say you will do it) is that you look into this matter, that you find whether what we tell you is true, that he is on the Board, that there has been deep conflict between this organization, the organized blind movement, and that organization, NAC, the National Accreditation Council. For him to be there brings the Administration unnecessarily into conflict and controversy. It is inappropriate for a top administrative official to sit on the board of a controversial organization in that kind of position, a private organization that creates problems. It's not like Rotary. That's all I'm asking of you, that you look into it."

Mr. Simmons said: "I did not mean to imply by that crack that I believed that this controversy is anything like Rotary. You can count on the fact that any issue that you bring to us that is important to you will get a fair hearing."

Dr. Jernigan added: "Do you consider that I have brought this issue to you?"

Mr. Simmons replied: "I consider it brought."

Dr. Jernigan: "We will expect you then as unequivocal and clear-cut as you have done in the past to tell us: 'Yes, we'll do something about it'; or (even if it is unpleasant): 'No, we won't do something about it.' But don't just leave us dangling. Tell us yes or no when you've looked into it."

Ben Prows asked what the policy is of the Social Security Administration when an individual has been paid too much money and must pay it back to the Social Security Administration.

Mr. Simmons answered that a variety of choices are available to an individual who has received an overpayment. That money may be paid back according to one of a number of different options.

Byron Sykes said that he is one of more than a hundred blind persons employed as tax payer service representatives by the Internal Revenue Service. He asked whether (in the event that this position is considerably revamped and reduced) Social Security would consider employing some of those people?

Mr. Simmons replied: "If something like that happened in another federal agency, we would certainly do our utmost to pick them up first. We have done that with the Health Care Financing Agency, for example. We're still a growth industry. We're the only government agency that's a growth industry I think."

Terry Thibodeau said: "Blind people who are selected to train for Social Security Teleservice Representatives have been selected by state directors of blind services. This means that you can be turned down by a director who doesn't particularly like your point of view." She wanted to know if the Social Security Administration had changed this policy so that applicants for this work could be directly screened by the

Social Security Administration or the Office of Personnel Management.

Mr. Simmons answered: "I'm not sure how the mechanism works, but I've made a note to go back and ask and find out what we are doing and why."

Dr. Jernigan added a comment on this point: "The federal state rehabilitation program (which had such high credibility thirty years ago and which now has low credibility in many areas as it has drifted away from service and toward bureaucracy) has been entrusted with screening for federal employment. I believe that last year when you were here, we had a situation where people wanted to apply like anybody else for Social Security positions, and they were told that they must go first to be cleared by their state rehabilitation agency and recommended by a counselor before they could come. We said we thought that was wrong. We ought to be able (like anybody else) to come and succeed and fail on our own merits. Therefore, since this Administration is committed to avoiding bureaucracy, we would say to you: Will you check the procedure by which blind people may apply for entrance into Social Security so that we are not forced to have one more requirement added to us than anybody else? We've got to be able to do the work—the things that others do—and then we've got to be recommended by a rehab counselor. If we happen to be trying to reform the rehab agency, or if we help send the director of the agency off to the pen because he's been defrauding the government of money, you can imagine how his cohorts might decide they'd get back at us some. I think this is the second year we've brought this one to you. Almost everything we asked before, you gave. And I don't want to take away from that. But here's one that may have slipped by. So we just want to know if you can look into that."

Mr. Simmons answered: "Well, hold up on the prosecutions. I'll see what I can do."

Dr. Jernigan said in conclusion: "We always have very candid conversations with you."

Mr. Simmons commented: "This was

more candid than most, but I enjoyed it. I really admire the spirit of this organization. I think you're making great strides, and I hope we can help you make some of them."

SURVIVING THE 1980's

by Philip E. Peterson

Director, Michigan Commission for the Blind &
President-Elect, National Council of State Agencies for the Blind

*Presented at the
National Federation of the Blind Convention
July 8, 1982
Minneapolis, Minnesota*

I certainly appreciate the opportunity to speak before a plenary session of the 1982 Convention of the National Federation of the Blind. It is certainly an honor for me to be invited to speak to such a knowledgeable and active consumer group as NFB.

Today, we find ourselves trying to provide meaningful service in a state and country beset by many problems. We are enduring one of the hardest and most prolonged recessions in our history. The last few years have brought one financial crisis after another. It has challenged those of us in state government to be as efficient and accountable as we possibly can be.

Hard times are not completely bad, however. Hard times can discipline people to think and act more responsibly. Hard times create financial managers. Hard times force bureaucracies to re-examine their responsibilities to people. Hard times force service providers back to basics. And . . . hard times shrink comfort zones.

I want to talk to you briefly this after-

noon about some of the pressing issues and challenges facing us.

Our greatest challenge has been, and will continue to be, finding job opportunities for blind people. We are hampered by high unemployment rates, reduced funding for vocational rehabilitation on both state and national levels, by prejudice and misunderstanding, and by an ever changing job market.

A local challenge is surviving the Michigan recession. We have been told for the last 5 or 6 years that recovery is just around the corner, and yet we are still waiting.

Many variables have prolonged the recession in Michigan. High labor and energy costs have encouraged industries to move out-of-state to the more attractive Sun Belt.

In the 15 months following the 1980 census, Michigan lost 54,000 people—more than any other state. (*U.S. News & World Report*, May 24, 1982, p. 8) When we lost

those people, we lost skilled workers, we lost tax revenue, we lost purchasing power, and we lost employers.

Being a one industry state has also presented many problems to job placement. As they say, the way the big three goes, so goes Michigan.

Our auto manufacturing cities, such as Flint, have had the highest unemployment rates in the country. Industry wide, there have been unemployment rates as high as 27%.

Budgeting for rehabilitation services is extremely difficult in a state that is continually losing industry and tax revenue. In fiscal 1982 alone, for example, Governor Milliken has had to rescind a whopping \$600 million from the state budget. As the year grinds on, each new recession takes on greater and greater importance.

Another concern is President Reagan's New Federalism.

I understand many of the problems that President Reagan is facing. The goal of cutting federal red tape and returning money to the states with fewer strings attached is an excellent one. However, there are some aspects of New Federalism that require careful study and caution.

My concerns deal with the effects the New Federalism will have on the Rehab. Act, Social Security, protection of separate agencies for the blind, and services to the elderly blind.

I'm concerned about attempts to repeal the Rehabilitation Act. If this attempt to repeal resurfaces and succeeds, "blindness" may no longer be legally defined as a "severe handicap" requiring multiple services over an extended period of time. As a result, blind people may not be given priority within vocational rehabilitation agencies.

If the Rehabilitation Act is repealed and not replaced with something of substance, the funding process could become highly

political. In fact, we might envision something similar to the awarding of defense contracts where only a lucky few, with the most political clout, would receive grant awards to carry out rehabilitation programming.

A repeal of the Rehab Act could also do away with the individualized written rehabilitation program. Without this guard against subjective rehabilitation planning, clients could get "lost in the system." Rehabilitation workers would no longer be required to specify, in writing, such critical aspects as who? what? why? when? where? and, how much?

Repeal of the Rehabilitation Act would encourage states to "fold together" all handicapped groups into one large general service agency. In such an agency, the specific needs of blind people may just be ignored. Consequently, programs that provide special services to meet special needs may be replaced by programs that will vaguely attempt to serve all handicapped groups.

Another one of my concerns is that sweeping changes in the law might spell the end to federally legislated and supported civil rights requirements. In December of 1981, for example, the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board, created by Section 502 of the Rehab Act, adopted a less stringent and less expensive set of rules. (*New York Times*, December 30, 1981) I believe this is indicative of how "New Federalism" may enhance state's rights at the expense of the Rehabilitation Act and the civil rights of the handicapped.

Another concern is Social Security benefits for handicapped individuals. The SSI/SSDI Program of reimbursement for rehabilitation service has been drastically reduced.

The Michigan Commission for the Blind, for example, has a possible allocation of \$27,000 for SSI and SSDI rehab programs

for fiscal 1982. This compares with reimbursements in the past of \$959,653 for fiscal 1981, and \$1,451,749 for fiscal 1980.

Not only has the amount of money been greatly reduced, but the rules are much stricter. In the past, rehabilitation agencies could receive reimbursements for serving SSI and SSDI clients no matter where clients were in the rehabilitation process. Now, however, reimbursements can only be made if the client is in a "substantial gainful activity" (i.e. employment) for nine months.

The SSI/SSDI Rehabilitation Program, as it exists now, could possibly be more trouble and more headaches than it is worth.

There are other problems with Social Security programs. Recently, I read that the Reagan Administration suspects "that as many as 584,000 people on disability, SSI and SSDI, may not be currently disabled and may be costing the government \$2 billion annually." As a result, as many as 360,000 cases will be reviewed each year. This is up from the 150,000 cases reviewed annually under the Carter Administration. The additional reviews, reportedly, are going to concentrate on SSDI cases because "the payoff is higher." (*Senate Congressional Record*, April 14, 1982)

In a recent *Congressional Record*, Senator Dole expressed concern about the accelerated review process. He included in his commentary this quote from Don Edgar Burris, the Chief Administrative Law Judge of Montana: "Every judge I know has seen cases so ridiculous they shouldn't even be coming before us. There's no way these people could be denied if the disability examiners were doing things in a conscientious manner."

A recent incident in Michigan supports Senator Dole's suspicions: A 49-year-old

Michigan man, Richard Kage, had his disability terminated after seven years even though he suffered from diabetes, legal blindness, stroke, heart trouble, and kidney disease. It was reported that this man "never drove a car or ventured out in public without two people beside him to help him keep his balance." It was also reported that a letter from the Social Security Administration stated, "You are found to have a severe impairment. However, it is found that you do retain sufficient capacity for light work activity requiring limited visual efficiency." (*Lansing State Journal*, May 24, 1982)

This case was appealed, but "by the time a disability medical examination could be arranged, Mr. Kage was again hospitalized by a double heart attack. He died two days after his scheduled appointment."

Mr. Kage's physician angrily expressed his frustrations in a letter to the Social Security Administration. He felt that the disability termination hastened his patient's death. (*Lansing State Journal*, May 24, 1982)

You can see from this account that this stepped-up review process has had great personal consequences for people like Mr. Kage. When people are decertified unjustly, the Social Security Administration should give top priority to reinstating them. Can you imagine what it would be like waiting six months . . . eight months . . . a year . . . to have your income restored!

Another New Federalism policy that concerns me is the apparent move to give funding priority to large umbrella agencies serving the handicapped. Last winter the Rehabilitation Services Administration indicated that they would give greater consideration to grant proposals if agencies for the blind would join with general VR agencies and submit one grant application.

This action by RSA de-emphasizes the value of separate agencies serving blind

persons, and seems contrary to the President's stand to protect states' rights to determine service priorities.

It is my hope that the President realizes that blind people have needs that are identifiably different from other handicapped groups, and that these needs require separate agencies offering unique services.

In response to this New Federalism policy, the National Council of State Agencies for the Blind resolved that the Secretary of Education should instruct the RSA commissioner and staff to respect and acknowledge the authority of states to administer separate agencies for blind persons.

Combining separate agencies for the blind with larger umbrella agencies would not be in the best interest of blind people. In general VR agencies, clients with lesser handicaps will probably receive priority because rehabilitation personnel will not have the money and expertise to serve the blind. As a result, blind clients will probably spend many months in referral and application statuses awaiting meaningful VR service.

Reduced funding by the federal government may well speed this process along. Cutbacks in rehabilitation funds could push states to consolidate VR agencies. Folding together money, personnel, and political persuasion will probably weaken placement activity on behalf of blind people.

Yet, another concern is the unfulfilled dream of making comprehensive rehabilitation services available to the elderly blind. Estimates vary, but it is widely recognized that over half of the nation's blind population is 55 and over.

The Michigan Commission for the Blind established a senior blind program in 1980 to provide independent living service in a two county area. The program was later enlarged to cover three additional counties. However, state cutbacks and lack of appro-

priations for Part C, Title VII, of the Rehab Act, has brought growth in this program to a standstill. In fact, in light of recent budget cutbacks the program may not survive at all.

We estimate that there are 20,000 elderly blind people in Michigan who can benefit from independent living rehabilitation, resource utilization, peer counseling, and consumer activism. Presently, we are only serving 8% of these people, and with the cutbacks we're facing we may have to stop serving those few.

Let me give you a small case history to emphasize how important this service really is.

Myra, an elderly lady 76 years of age, with light perception only, lived alone in her own home. Her son, a well-to-do community leader, visited her only rarely. Myra's daughter-in-law would visit her one day a month to take her shopping, to read her mail, and to pay her bills. Another lady came by one day a week to prepare small dinners for the freezer. Myra would heat these meals in an electric frypan because she was afraid to use her range.

When a rehabilitation teacher from our senior blind program first visited this elderly lady, Myra said, "Take me to the basement. I haven't seen it in three years."

Shortly after that first visit, our worker got a volunteer to take Myra shopping every week and a friendly visitor to call her everyday. The teacher taught her to use the range and oven to cook and bake again. Myra also learned to travel in her yard, in her neighborhood, and throughout her community.

Without state and federal funding for the elderly blind, successful accounts like this one will be rare indeed.

Another program that may be affected by the new federal strategy is radio reading services.

Radio reading service is one useful tool

in breaking down barriers to the print handicapped. At present, I understand, 125,000 people out of a possible audience of 3 million are using radio reading services. This represents approximately 4% of the potential audience. Without the support of governments, regulatory agencies, commissions, boards, etc., this service will remain in an infancy stage for years.

Client assistance projects also need continued state and federal attention and support. In April of this year, the National Council of State Agencies for the Blind lent their support to client assistance projects by recommending that funding be at the \$3.5 million ceiling level.

In the past 3½ years, our client assistance project in Michigan has provided technical assistance to 1,080 clients. They have assisted some 26 clients with administrative reviews and fair hearings, and they have reviewed 789 cases.

Unfortunately, state fiscal problems have "spilled over" into our 100% federally funded programs. As a result, one client assistance worker was laid-off, but has recently been called back to work, while another faces transfer to a counselor position within the vocational rehabilitation program.

I certainly hope that present state and federal fiscal problems do not bring a permanent end to these special client advocacy programs.

Well, I have talked long enough about the concerns and challenges facing us in Michigan and around the country. Let's spend a few minutes and talk about how we can begin to deal with many of these problems.

One solution is fully utilizing present rehabilitation workers to meet service demands.

As greater strains are placed on the budgets of rehabilitation agencies, directors will have to be more creative in using

employees to get the job done.

In Michigan, we recognize the need for our itinerate teachers to have as many skills as possible. Our rehabilitation teachers and counselors, for instance, are receiving inservice training in orientation and mobility so this basic skill can be offered to all clients whenever the need arises.

The importance of expanding worker competencies was emphasized recently when our field service program was hit with some layoffs. These layoffs will certainly put us to the test.

Another solution is to emphasize literacy and communications skills to enhance client employability. According to *U.S. News and World Report*, "23 million Americans, 1 in 5 adults, lack the reading and writing abilities needed to handle the minimal demands of daily living." Another "30 million are only marginally capable of being productive workers." (*U.S. News and World Report*, May 17, 1982)

We, at the Michigan Commission for the Blind, believe that literacy is as important today as it has ever been. We believe in education and vocational rehabilitation service that emphasizes the importance of basic communication skills. We strongly feel that the person with the best communications skills will have the best opportunities for good paying jobs.

Recently, the Commission completed a survey of school age blind youth. The survey covered such things as training in Braille writing and reading, availability of adaptive study material, participation in career orientated clubs, and involvement in science and physical education classes. The results of this survey will alert us to problems that will be barriers to job placement some day.

We believe that day-to-day emphasis on communications skills, such as Braille reading and writing, will allow these young

people to communicate freely and effectively with themselves and those around them. Emphasis on good writing, listening, reading, and speaking skills will make blind people better employment prospects.

Another bright spot on the horizon is the new technology that will allow blind people to compete actively with sighted job seekers. Reading machines and talking calculators, computers and word processors are tremendous advances with dynamic employment implications.

Some of the most exciting advances, however, have been those that have made Braille material more accessible. As you know, the major problems with Braille have been availability, transcription, reproduction, and storage. Remarkably, today's high tech devices are solving those problems.

Braille stored on cassette tapes and electronic Braille readouts eliminate the great problem of storing bound, Braille volumes. Where the printing of Braille is necessary, computerized translation and transcription is a revolutionary development. Here, a typist with no knowledge of Braille can reproduce any print information in the Braille format.

We, for example, are in the process of producing the Michigan Commission for the Blind Casework Manual in Braille using a talking word processor/computer and an electronic Braille printer.

I must admit that we are still new at this, and that we are still learning how to get the most out of our equipment. Nevertheless, as our understanding grows, we are beginning to see new applications for these marvelous machines.

I just hope that state and federal governments, agencies for the blind, consumer groups, and private industry will support the acquisition and maintenance of advanced equipment designed to help blind

people in the competitive labor market.

Another possible way of dealing with limited resources is a continued commitment to an honest, straightforward approach to job counseling. We cannot afford to have clients in training programs that provide slim hope for employment. Job planning between client and counselor must yield a realistic expectation that training will end in a job.

Obviously, this is easier said than done. Predicting where the jobs are going to be is a great challenge in itself. The predictions from the Bureau of Labor Statistics are based on past or current demands; consequently, projections cannot reflect rapid technological changes. For example, "key punch operators and computer programmers—two growing occupations right now—could be obsolete by 1990." (*Consumer's Digest* March/April 1982)

Nevertheless, current information suggests that job opportunities will be available in medicine and health, retailing, restauranting, recreation, financial and business service, and computers. (*Consumer's Digest* March/April 1982) We're passing this and other information along to our clients, hoping it will have an effect on job planning, training, and placement.

A solution that cuts across all programs and service objectives is that of consumerism. Consumerism has been, and will continue to be our greatest strength in Michigan and around the country.

The Commission relies heavily on consumerism. A five member Commission—three of whom must be blind—plans services, sets policy, and implements a wide range of rehabilitation programs. Commission meetings provide a public forum for consumers to express their opinions and concerns. These meetings also allow consumers to witness policy formulation and interpretation. Overall, the Commission system gives credence to the claim that we

are a consumer oriented, service organization.

Another great advantage of the Commission system is that the Commissioners are free to contact the Governor, legislators, department heads, and others who may have the power and influence to affect rehabilitation service. As a result, our Commissioners have had to wrestle with some difficult problems, and they have chosen to act during difficult times.

Naturally, we in Michigan feel that the Commission structure is the best way to meet the needs of blind people. We depend on consumers for input, advice, program planning and implementation, policy making, and technical assistance.

Yes, consumerism is important, and there are, as I see it, some important consumerism goals for the 1980's.

One such goal is support of Social Security Disability programs.

Currently, there are 2.9 million workers and 1.8 million family members receiving SSDI, and 2.3 million individuals and couples receiving SSI. (*Senate Congressional Record*, April 14, 1982)

Fraudulent practices should be exposed and eliminated; however, as in the case of Michigan's Mr. Kage, the decertifying of legitimate claims must be prevented. Zealous investigators can be made to act reasonably if there is a great consumer outcry against the decertification of those in need.

A primary consumerism goal for the 1980's will be to encourage the elderly blind to speak out more aggressively on their own behalf.

Without such consumerism, services to senior blind people could completely disappear because many of these people silently accept their plight as an unavoidable condition of old age. Consequently, many feel that they are not worthy of some other person's time, money, or

energy. Certainly, most do not know anything about the resources available to help them live independently without sight.

Elderly blind people will need the support of the NFB, the Council on Aging, and any other consumer group who wishes to lend a helping hand. As mentioned earlier, the elderly blind make up over half of the blind population and yet their consumer voice is relatively weak. I know that the NFB will do their part in strengthening the consumer voice of the largest segment of the blind population.

At home, we are counting on the blind consumers to help us preserve our senior blind program. Without their support it will be difficult, near impossible, for us to withstand cutbacks in this area. Without action by consumers, I am afraid that this budding service program will become an historical footnote.

Certainly, consumerism is our most potent weapon against attack. The support and cooperation of consumers will help us deal with Social Security, job placement, and service to the elderly blind.

Consumerism is appreciated and encouraged in Michigan. We will not shy away from it or pretend that it does not exist. We will continue to work jointly with consumers for the benefit of all blind and visually impaired people.

Before I close, I think it would be fitting to recognize a few members of the National Federation of the Blind of Michigan for their leadership abilities and their skills in helping us meet the challenge of rehabilitation.

The first person I want to recognize is John Mullin, Chairperson of the Michigan Commission for the Blind. John invests much of his time and energy on behalf of the blind people of Michigan. He is an active and capable Chairperson who possesses great understanding of the rehabilitation needs of blind people.

I would also like to acknowledge Al Harris, President of the National Federation of the Blind of Michigan, for his input, support, and leadership in the state of Michigan.

Other NFB members active in Commission activities include: Larry Posont, Chairperson, and El Phillips, Vice-Chairperson of the state elected Operator's Committee; Beverly Helmboldt, Vice-Chairperson, Senior Blind Advisory Committee; and Steve Zielinsky, Chairperson, Consumer Involvement Council.

In addition, I want to thank the NFB chapter presidents and other Federationists for their support on many issues and projects.

In Michigan, the National Federation of the Blind has made and is making a great contribution to the rehabilitation of blind people.

I am proud of the consumer participation in Michigan—it is truly one of our great strengths. With this kind of support, we cannot fail to meet the challenges of the 1980's and beyond.

PROGRESS TOWARD EQUALITY FOR THE BLIND

IN SHELTERED WORKSHOPS:

LEGISLATION TO REFORM THE WAGNER-O'DAY ACT

by Congressman Barry M. Goldwater, Jr.
United States House of Representatives

(Note: As reported in the September, 1982, Monitor, Congressman Barry M. Goldwater, Jr. received the Newel Perry Award at the Federation's convention in Minneapolis. The presentation was made at the banquet Thursday evening, July 8. Congressman Goldwater addressed the convention Thursday afternoon. He spoke as follows:)

Thank you for inviting me to share with you this very fine and important convention. Dr. Jernigan, you are truly an inspiration not only for the blind but those of us in government who look to you in the private sector for leadership. You stand out at the top, and we're very proud of you, Dr. Jernigan. I would also like to recognize three other individuals: Jim Gashel, Sharon Gold, and Jim Mitchell. Jim Gashel, who has tirelessly led the fight for independence of the blind on Capitol Hill and in all the federal agencies for the last eight years, has been an inspiration to those

of us who need a shot of optimism. Whenever I thought I had terrible problems, Jim would walk in with one of his and a way to solve both of them. Jim is doing an outstanding job for you in covering the government affairs that interest you, the blind, and I see him walking the halls of Congress on a regular basis. Sharon Gold comes from my home state of California and is your President of the Western Division—a dedicated teacher in the high desert of Edwards Air Force Base, and now she tells me she's going on to law school. Sharon Gold has stuck to her convictions in

a wild and woolly state. She has done a terrific job in very trying and terrible circumstances. We're very proud of you, Sharon. Jim Mitchell is another individual who was kind enough to be with me in my suite on election night during the primary on June 8, and, in fact, talked many Democrats into changing their registration so that they could vote for me in the primary. The problem is, Jim, you didn't change enough votes. We could have used a few more million. It seems like just yesterday that Jim Gashel and Sharon Gold walked into my office and doubled my work load. We've all traveled a long way since then.

When I was first invited to speak to you, I was a candidate for the Republican nomination for the United States Senate from California. And, of course, I expected to win. I expected to talk to you today about what I intended to do in the Senate on behalf of this country in general and on behalf of blind Americans in particular. As you know, I did not win that nomination. Therefore, I had to rethink what I would say to you today, since the focus of my career has changed somewhat. For a while I simply could not imagine what I could say beyond describing the legislation that I recently introduced to provide new job opportunities for the blind. After all, my relationship with the National Federation of the Blind has been based pretty much on the fact that you are an organized constituency with certain specific needs and goals, and I'm a politician who is sympathetic to what you are trying to achieve. Our relationship never went too far beyond that—not until my defeat. Then, a number of things happened that gave me a real glimpse of what it would be like to have to make a concerted effort to live a normal life like every one else. I take my eyesight for granted. However, I do not think that the only difference is that I can see and you

cannot. For instance, I have never had to fight personal injustice. You have been fighting it all your lives. I have never been discriminated against with the possible exception of people who think snakes and politicians are about the same height off the ground. My most serious handicap is tendinitis from all the handshaking I've done over the years. Nobody has ever looked at me and assumed that I was less capable than the next person because of the tendinitis. You pitch a never ending battle with discrimination in various forms and constantly run up against the wall of negative attitudes. I can safely assume that from time to time you are patronized or you're constantly told what is good for you regardless of what you want. Or you may be fed a never ending stream of platitudes. Well, please welcome me to the club. Since election day I have on occasion been fed platitudes, patronized, fussed over, and everybody knows what is good for me but me. Not that any of this has been done with anything but the best intentions. I'll bet everyone in this room could tell me stories about people with good intentions. For the first time, I guess I understand the underdog. Shucks! I am one. I have become intimately familiar with worried and concerned looks on the faces of other people. I haven't been patted on the back this much since my mother was still burping me. I wish I had a nickel for every time someone has asked me: Well, what will you do? Where will you go? And how will you get there? Do these questions sound familiar to you?

The questions being asked of me, I know, are much like those being asked of you, both as individuals and as a Federation. What will you do? Where will you go? And how will you get there? Well, I thought I would share with you some of the thoughts I have been applying to my own situation. In hopes that they may give

you an idea or be of some help.

My first idea is that in the inventory of resources the most important one is you, the individual. You can hardly expect anyone else to help you if you don't first help yourself. In helping yourself, you must believe what you say you believe and understand it. Then you must share your convictions. A secret conviction rarely does anyone any good. You must risk being scorned, rejected, laughed at, or worse, ignored. How many times have you heard an idea expressed when you said to yourself: Why, that's just what I was thinking. How often we dismiss our own ideas out of hand just because they are ours. In the coming months and years you will probably be called upon to do more for your Federation than ever before. The National Federation of the Blind is locked in a battle for its very existence. There are opposing philosophies intent on defeating you as a group. Don't let it happen! (applause and cheers from the audience) Don't let it happen because you have worked too hard and come too far on an unpaved road loaded with obstacles. I don't believe for one moment that if each of you in this room pursues what you know to be right that you won't ultimately be victorious. You will win.

My part in helping you with your struggle to be left alone is the legislation that I introduced last month, HR-6529, the Jobs and Business Opportunities for the Handicapped Act of 1982. Part of my philosophy is that if a person has a job and the opportunity to advance in it, most other problems tend to be solved more easily. Three years ago I asked the General Accounting Office to conduct a major investigation into the manner in which sheltered workshops for the blind and handicapped are operated in the United States. The results of the investigation were very disturbing. The report clearly showed

that the Wagner-O'Day Act of 1938, which established the built-in guaranteed federal market for the workshops, is in serious need of revision and update. Moreover, in thinking about the report as a whole, I was concerned that the direction being taken in this country to foster self-sufficiency in the blind community is in need of clarification. You do not need to be led by the hand anywhere. What you do need is the opportunity to follow your own destiny in your own way and in your own time whenever and wherever that may be.

Now this piece of legislation which I introduced and which Jim Gashel, Ralph Sanders, and others are helping to gain co-sponsors on, will help to achieve self-sufficiency in three different ways. One. It would help to eliminate the Committee for the Purchase of the Blind and the Severely Handicapped. It would also eliminate the committee's two subcontractors, the National Industries for the Blind (applause) . . . Now I want you all to settle down and take that same energy and put it behind getting this legislation passed. (more applause) This legislation would eliminate the two subcontractors, the National Industries for the Blind and the National Industries for the Severely Handicapped. Neither of these subcontractors are actually agencies of the federal government and, therefore, are not required to file annual operating plans or financial statements. However, since they charge between 4 and 10% of each contract they administer on behalf of the federal government, there are millions of dollars involved. My bill would take a more orderly and logical approach and save the taxpayers money as well. It would establish an office in the Department of Commerce called the Handicapped Employment and Business Opportunities Administration. Contract administration would be streamlined, and the money involved would be brought out

into the open. Through fiscal year 1985 the office would cost approximately \$5½ million to operate. For the same period it would cost the federal government approximately \$19 million in commissions and appropriations to run the system in its present form. My bill would save the taxpayers approximately \$13½ million and accomplish these things: One. Modernize a forty-five-year-old law; Two. Give blind Americans the financial opportunity to make it on their own incentive; and Three. Forever end the domination of blind individuals by an inflexible system that excludes more than it includes and which fosters an attitude of dependency.

A secondary of this legislation would encourage real independence by encouraging blind workers in workshops to move from direct labor jobs to supervisory positions and management. At least 60% of the contracting workshops' employees, including management and support personnel, would have to be blind or handicapped. My bill also requires that at least 60% of the wages, salaries, and fringe benefits must go to employees who are blind or handicapped. As you are well aware, current law allows a workshop to receive federal contracts if at least 75% of the employees provide direct labor hours. Of course, this has the effect of keeping most of them on the assembly line. Finally, if you have grit and determination—this piece of legislation would allow you a much greater opportunity to run your own business. It would allow profit-making companies to compete for Wagner-O'Day contracts as long as you meet the 60% rule I mentioned earlier.

This piece of legislation happens to fit with my own philosophy, and with your help, we will be able to make it law.

In his essay on self-reliance, Ralph Waldo

Emerson set up a number of guideposts that I have found useful. For instance, he said, "There is a time in every man's education when he arrives at the conviction that envy is ignorance; that imitation is suicide; that he must take himself for better or worse as his portion; that though the wide universe is full of good, no kernel of nourishing corn can come to him but through his toil bestowed on that plot of ground which is given to him to till. The power which resides in him is new in nature, and none but he knows what that is which he can do, nor does he know until he has tried. Trust thyself [he said] every heart vibrates to that iron string." Therefore here are the answers to the questions I posed earlier: What will you do? Where will you go? How will you get there? You will do what is right wherever it needs doing. And you will get there the same way you get everywhere else, with honest courage and sheer determination. It has been and will continue to be a sincere pleasure to travel along with you.

After Congressman Goldwater's address, Dr. Jernigan said: "Congressman Goldwater, we of this organization keep our promises. We keep them to our friends; we keep them to our opponents; and we keep them to ourselves. We believe that you have been (and are) our friend, a friend of blind people. It makes not the slightest difference to us that you lost a skirmish. There are other days. We have a saying: This organization often loses skirmishes; it sometimes loses battles; it never loses wars—because the war is never over until we prevail. With that in mind, we are pleased and honored to have you as our colleague, and we're glad you came to talk with us."

A STATUS REPORT FROM THE NATIONAL LIBRARY SERVICE
FOR THE BLIND AND PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED:
CURRENT DIRECTIONS AND FUTURE PLANS

by Frank Kurt Cylke, Director
National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped
Library of Congress

*Presentation to the
National Federation of the Blind Convention
July 7, 1982
Minneapolis, Minnesota*

I am pleased that again this year we are together to share our experiences and concerns regarding library services for blind and physically handicapped individuals.

The staff from NLS looks forward to these annual meetings as good opportunities for exchanging information that will lead to better services.

Of course, all our cooperative work is not done here in a conference environment. You will recall that at last year's convention in Baltimore Mr. Jernigan and I agreed to exchange orientation visits and to pursue work in areas of mutual concern. That has happened.

Visits to and from Baltimore and Washington resulted in clearer understandings of our specific roles regarding the information transfer process. An article describing NLS services, written by Judith Dixon, appeared in a recent *Braille Monitor*.

Today, in an effort to bring into focus our range of services and new efforts I will first briefly identify recent audio activities and then describe past and current Braille efforts.

Audio

The combination machine will be in production in January 1983. While it has taken some years to perfect this device I am sure users will be pleased with the quality of sound and related user tested controls.

A pitch restoration component has been built into the latest cassette playback machine, the C-80 model. This feature permits readers to use the variable-speed control to achieve faster or slower speeds than the rate of the original narration without changing the pitch of the narrator's voice. All major elements of the C-80 model are similar to the previous model—the C-79—in quality and in operation.

A cassette machine with simplified controls and automatic track switching will be out soon. This will be useful to anyone who wishes a "smooth, control free" reading experience.

Plans are in progress to develop a mini portable cassette machine for use by those with a requirement for portability.

These three new machines will be added

to our inventory with the result being a catalog from which users with specific needs can be served.

Braille

As you all can appreciate, Braille is an area of especial concern. Costs are rising, demands for a broader variety of materials are rising, and solutions to the cost/demand situation are not forthcoming.

As you know we at NLS undertook a study of cassette-Braille. This study was completed in December 1981, after more than two years of technical evaluation by NLS. Braille readers in five cities also evaluated the machines. The user study was conducted for us by VSE Corporation of Alexandria, Virginia.

Findings indicate that the concept is well received by patrons, but the technology needs further development before these machines can be used to supplement paper Braille for a mass audience. This is not good news.

This has caused us to again evaluate where we are, what we have done, and to project where our emphasis will be in the future.

Today I will briefly detail several projects that have been pursued to bring us to our present base:

The setting for all Braille and other R&D projects at NLS is, of course, the production and distribution of books and magazines. The program began in 1931 with Braille, which today remains 10% of the \$33 million budget. Depending on costs we reproduce about 375 Braille books and 36 or more magazines each year. Both books and magazines are produced in large quantities. Some additional magazines are purchased—a few from the Royal National Institute for the Blind in Great Britain. Tight and detailed monitoring of production to our quality assurance standards is maintained by our Production Control

Section.

NLS funded Triformation's development of the PED-30, the automatic plate embosser. This development contract, spanning a period from late 1976 to early 1978, resulted in the development of two plate embossers—the other was placed at Clovernook Printing House for the Blind. Both presses value the embosser highly and their success was certainly a stimulus for acquisition of an embosser by a third press, Volunteer Services for the Blind in Philadelphia. The embossers, computer-driven, operate in production conditions at rates five to six times faster than a stereotype operator can achieve.

During 1975-76 NLS played a significant role with three other national organizations in planning and realizing the reorganization of the Braille Authority of the U.S. into the Braille Authority of North America. The same persons have remained active as official representatives and/or through chairing technical committees—currently Richard Evensen is Chairman of BANA, and Maxine Dorf is Chairman, Literary Braille Technical Committee.

To keep abreast of developments in Braille equipment in Europe, the Library of Congress sent two of NLS' most knowledgeable persons in Braille technology to Heidelberg, Amsterdam, and London in May 1976. Although some very interesting prototype developments were observed and examined, none of the equipment or systems viewed were in production, met U.S. needs, or were economical for the advantages propounded. Among the systems studied were a computer-assisted print-to-Braille system and a stereograph machine with Braille display in Germany; a line-embossing device employing lift springs as pin drivers; and the Braille system then in place at RNIB.

From 1976 to 1978 NLS sponsored development of a print-to-Braille system by

Kurzweil Computer Products. The system has two phases, the first using a technologically advanced data entry system now widely used also outside the Braille field. It scans print automatically through optical character recognition and fine-tuned by periodic operator assistance at the terminal. The second phase is Braille translation using the Duxbury System with modifications appropriate to the equipment and software used. The resulting equipment is now part of the Braille production pilot facility established at the American Foundation for the Blind. The obvious success of the data entry system played an important part in the purchase of a KDEM by Clovernook, an NLS contractor.

Use of compositor tapes for print input was studied again beginning in 1979—there was a previous attempt in the 60's. National Braille Press, under NLS funding, began producing *National Geographic* magazine in the spring of 1979. Plans and prospects for this effort were discussed at the London conference that year by H. Paris, who has continued to guide this and related projects to the present. The later developments include funding National Braille Press to develop computer programs and procedures for increasing the degree of automation in converting publishers' tapes, stripping printers' commands, adding Braille commands, and in other ways preparing the material for Braille translation and embossing.

A concurrent effort is identifying the steps required for converting publishers' tapes of a news weekly, reformatting and rearranging material for a Braille edition, and producing each issue in time for release along with the print edition. This effort is under way at the American Printing House for the Blind with NLS funds, begun in the fall of 1981.

Production of two Braille magazines in Grade 1 was also initiated in 1979. The aim

is to determine whether significant numbers of persons who find Grade 2 difficult to learn and read will use Grade 1 reading materials. The number of readers has been small; they will be surveyed soon.

In 1979-80 a major study was made of the production processes and costs at the major American presses producing magazines and books for NLS. The study was conducted by Exotech Research and Analysis. The resulting four-volume study, with flow charts, cost data and formulas, as well as narrative, provided benchmark data and analyses. To our knowledge it is the only study of its kind available today.

The Braille Authority of North America adopted some changes in the Braille code in 1980. They were the result of study, discussions and recommendations of BANA's Literary Braille Technical Committee. These changes did not affect adversely the clarity of Braille reading (i.e., no complaints from Braille readers), yet at the same time positively aided automatic input (as with compositor tapes and optical character recognition) and computer-assisted Braille translation.

Ongoing since mid-1980 are the many preparation steps that will culminate in September 1982 in the International Conference on English Braille Grade 2. Actually, the idea of the conference began with a resolution, introduced by the NLS representative to BANA in 1978, adopted by that body and forwarded to the counterpart British organization now known as the Braille Authority of the United Kingdom. The conference will be held at NLS' offices September 13-17, 1982. The initial purpose of this meeting was and is the achieving of a unified literary Braille code for nations using contracted English Braille.

In the spring of 1981, NLS developed performance specifications for a high-speed paper embosser. A contract award will be

made soon—within days. If the development is successful, then a highly reliable easy-to-operate, fast Braille embosser at a reasonable price will be available for on-demand duplication of Braille books.

In the summer of 1981, NLS received the first Matsumoto Minolta copier sold outside Japan. The speed with which a tactile copy of a line drawing, etc. can be made is exciting, as is the clarity of the raised portions. Possible uses of the product of this copier are being studied, using outside assistance where necessary.

Preceding comments place our Braille

efforts in perspective. Now the question is where to place an emphasis in future activities.

Conclusion

Today I have briefly cited our current audio efforts and offered a more detailed review of Braille work. Your collective, or individual, comments will be welcome. You may pass them directly to me or through Judy Dixon. All will be reviewed and responded to in a reasonable period of time.

RADIO READING SERVICES FOR THE BLIND

PERILS AND PROSPECTS

by Rosie Hurwitz

Mrs. Hurwitz was presented to the convention by Dick Edlund, Treasurer of the Federation. He said: "Rosie Hurwitz is the Director of the Radio Reading Service for the Blind in Kansas, which is called the Kansas Audio Reader, and she is also President of the National Association of Radio Reading Services. I have worked very closely with Mrs. Hurwitz for a good long while now. I have found her to be extremely cooperative and a good Federationist. Since we're short on time, I'll put Mrs. Hurwitz on the microphone right now."

Mrs. Hurwitz spoke as follows: "One of the most significant milestones in the history of the blind in this country was the founding of the National Federation of the Blind in 1940. Another very important event was the founding of the National Library Service in the early 1930's. As blind people gained better recognition in this country, and as the general population

became more aware of the general resources, skills, and talents inherent in this heretofore under-utilized portion of our population—it became apparent that for the blind immediate access to current local information would provide an important companion service to the already existing National Library Service. Thus began the gestation period that would produce a brand new use of existing technology and provide reading by radio for blind, handicapped, and elderly people and provide them the same access to daily newspapers, current magazines, and local information of all kinds that the sighted world takes for granted. The man whose vision made possible the development of Radio Reading Services in this country was C. Stanley Potter, Director of Services for the Blind for the state of Minnesota. That first Radio Reading Service went on the air January 2, 1969, at the Communications Center in

St. Paul, the same organization that's airing the materials from this convention. Today (thirteen years later) there are 112 Radio Reading Services in the United States. The individual Radio Reading Services banded together to become the Association of Radio Reading Services in the spring of 1977 when bylaws were formally adopted.

"The primary purpose of ARRS is to encourage the establishment and operation of Radio Reading Services, to share technical and program information for the benefit of services, to participate with broadcasting agencies, and research manufacturing and commercial entities in policy, program, and technical development, and to do any other lawful thing which will assist such Radio Reading Services in the distribution and dissemination of health, recreation, education, and other public or social service information."

Mrs. Hurwitz continued with the description of the operation and development of Radio Reading Services. Then she said: "The amendment of the Communications Act of 1981 signed by the President on August 13 of that year, eased some of the restrictions on the use of equipment purchased with federal dollars in order to earn additional income for public radio stations. In Section 399-B, Subsection 1, of the Act, it states that each public broadcast station shall be authorized to engage in the offering of services, facilities, or products in exchange for remuneration. However, Section 399-B, Subsection C, modifies this by stating in part, 'Any such offering by a public broadcast station shall not interfere with the provision of public telecommunications services by such station.' Therefore, you would naturally conclude that Radio Reading Services are protected by the law. Apparently the Federal Communications Commission has not read the law. And who makes the law? Is it Congress, our authorized law making

body? Is it the FCC—a regulating body, which purports to protect the public interest? In this case it is the interests of big business, big National Public Radio, people with big dollars who support public broadcasting across the country. The Association of Radio Reading Services has hired a Washington law firm to research the situation. We are prepared to litigate in the event of an unfavorable decision on 82-1. We propose to compromise that the base band be broadened as NPR requested in their petition, but that the present and only existing space, which is already protected by law, be preserved for public telecommunications services such as Radio Reading Services. Thus, a second SCA (sub-carrier frequency) could be used by public non-commercial stations for profit if the law can be interpreted to permit it. So far our efforts have proved fruitless.

"So how will the story end? Will power, dollars, and influence stifle not-for-profit reading services who operate on shoestring budgets to bring current information to blind people so that everyone may have access to the printed word? The next 30 to 60 days will tell the tale. I beg your help in showing the country that blind people will be heard. We're not the docile, powerless group they think we are. Won't you join us in this fight to protect what rightfully belongs to you—access to current printed information that permits the opportunities for maximum independence and social interaction! I hope many of you are presently involving yourselves in the activities of your local Radio Reading Services. I hope in the future you will get more involved so your local Radio Reading Service can do the best possible job in meeting the needs that you and we together can devise. I hope this powerful assembly will pass a resolution declaring its support for continued local Radio Reading Services. I hope each of you as individuals

will contact your members of Congress immediately with the request to preserve local Radio Reading Services and to protest

approval of Broadcast Docket 82-1 at the Federal Communications Commission. Together we can make a difference.”

A MODEST PROPOSAL

(Note: Professor Charles Hallenbeck is not only an active member of the National Federation of the Blind and a Professor at the University of Kansas but also a man of wit and perception. He should not be blamed for the title which the editors have given his letter—may the shadow of Jonathan Swift take notice and be mollified. Somehow it seemed appropriate.)

Lawrence, Kansas
September 1, 1982

William Hogan
Associate Executive Vice Chancellor
Campus

Dear Bill:

In his recent memorandum, Executive Vice Chancellor Cob outlined the current difficulty in meeting utility costs, and invited that suggestions for further reductions of service be directed to you.

With the removal of air conditioning except for priority areas, such as animal facilities and computers, and with the elimination of telephones from unnecessary locations, such as the offices of graduate teaching assistants and many faculty, it is not easy to identify further reductions which will contribute to recovering the anticipated \$1,000,000 shortfall. However, in my experience, there is an obvious solution which I calculate would go more than half way toward meeting that goal. It is the removal of light bulbs from all classrooms, corridors, and offices at the university. It has been my experience that these devices serve no useful purpose whatsoever, and in fact, only aggravate the need

for heat removal which is bad enough without light bulbs pouring their excess energy into the thermal environment. This may place some visually dependent members of the university community at a slight disadvantage until they have achieved some accommodation to the situation, but I can assure you that I and my colleagues in the Douglas County Chapter of the National Federation of the Blind of Kansas will be ready and willing to conduct “orientation and mobility” seminars, provide cane-travel training, instruction in the reading and writing of Braille, and similar non-energy-dependent alternative techniques to the costly and wasteful ones now in general use. I am confident that we could reach agreement on terms for such training seminars which would be agreeable to our group as well as to the university, and would still constitute a net gain for the university and take us all a step closer to

true energy independence in the 1980's.

I hope you will find the above suggestion constructive and in keeping with the new policies of conservation and sound budgeting which are now in vogue on our campus. Thank you for giving this sugges-

tion your consideration.

Sincerely,
Charles Hallenbeck

cc: Dr. Kenneth Jernigan
Daily Kansan

FEDERATION CHAPTER ORGANIZED AT SOUTH CAROLINA SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND

Another Federation first occurred in South Carolina on Wednesday evening, September 1. This featured the formation of a chapter of the National Federation of the Blind of South Carolina at the South Carolina School for the Blind at Spartanburg. South Carolinians are proud of the fact that this is the first Federation chapter to be organized at a residential school in this country. Twenty-five high school students listened to NFB First Vice President Donald Capps talk about the Federation, liked what they heard, and enthusiastically became young Federationists. Capps serves on the Board of Commissioners of the school. Federationists throughout the country will recall that Dr. A. Baron Holmes, president of the school, addressed the national convention in Minneapolis. The officers of the South Carolina School for the Blind Chapter are: President Jarvis Williams, Vice President Vernon Cauthern,

Secretary Debbie Ellis, Treasurer Brenda Kimmerlin, and Social Director Sarah Nelson. Glenn McCoy, former board member of the NFB of SC and recent graduate of Emory University, spent three days at the school and did an excellent recruitment job for the September 1 meeting. Also attending the organizing meeting was Bob Oglesby, Secretary of the NFB of SC, who is on the faculty of the school. Throughout the meeting, First Vice President Capps stressed the philosophy of the Federation and the independence of the blind. At the conclusion of the highly successful meeting, it was apparent that the twenty-five young Federationists were very much in tune with the Federation philosophy and many will be our leaders of tomorrow. Our thanks to school officials for their cooperation and support of these fine young people.

COMMENTS WITH A TANG

by Kenneth Jernigan

I get letters from all kinds from all sorts. Sometimes they tell me how good I am, and sometimes they tell me how good it would be if I were gone—long gone. They lecture; they advise; and they preach. They inform; they comfort; and they encourage. I read them all—well, almost all (at least, as many as I can); and I try to learn from them.

And then, there is Gertrude Ward. Her letters are in a category all of their own. She scolds me, gives me a tongue lashing, tells me what I ought to do, and now and again compliments me. But she is never dull, and she is never wishy-washy. She has definite opinions (on almost everything), and she expresses them. She serves as a check and balance—a touchstone of reality. She helps me keep perspective—and (although my detractors would be shocked at the thought) a touch of humility. If she doesn't like it, she tells you, and you don't have to wonder what she meant.

As you might imagine, we sometimes agree—and we very often don't. It really doesn't matter. She is about as genuine and unphony as anybody I know, and that is sufficient—even if she gets her facts mixed now and again, or tells me mine are mixed. Be that as it may, here is a letter I got from Gertrude in the middle of the summer:

Dear Mr. Jernigan:

It likely has occurred to you that if all the blind employees quit the sheltered shop in a body, the shop would close. If the shop hired other handicapped people in order to stay open, it would violate its charter as a shop for the blind, and would

still eventually be closed by the law. For this reason would it not be cheaper to persuade the blind in a shop that abuses them to quit instead of letting themselves be treated like slaves? Such treatment is degrading, to say the least.

So long as the blind are willing to work under such employers, just that long will they be slaves. Even if a few blind people did not follow the majority out of the shop, the shop still could not remain open. In other words, take away their lackeys who earn their bread for them. I suggest you find one shop on which to try out this experiment. Parasites will never change until you deprive them of their prey.

NFB might do better to help blind people find jobs which are easier to obtain first. Then, the faster blind people have jobs, the more they can finance NFB in its fight to obtain better jobs for all of the blind. Let's stop arguing with pig-headed professionals and instead hit them where it hurts—right in their breadbaskets.

Be sure to tell us in the *Braille Monitor* what the Appropriations Committee said about how the National Library Service has wasted the money that should have been spent on Braille books. Tell NLS we will be double damned if we are going to put up with such waste and deprivation any longer.

Please discuss all of this with the other NFB officers and leaders. I hope you and they will agree to try out my suggestion. NFB must try different methods for bringing certain people to heel.

Gertrude Ward

MARYLAND CONVENTION

(YET ANOTHER NFB MONTH PROCLAIMED)

The 1982 convention of the National Federation of the Blind of Maryland was held in Baltimore over the weekend of August 27-29. A large and enthusiastic crowd was on hand for all convention sessions.

Friday evening's activities included meetings of the Board of Directors, Resolutions, etc., and a lot of hospitality. The real excitement began Saturday morning when a proclamation was read from Mayor William Donald Schaefer designating the month of October as National Federation of the Blind Month in Baltimore City. The spirit and enthusiasm grew as Dr. Jernigan presented the report from the National Office.

The next item, "Buzzers and Beepers Bug the Blind of Baltimore," didn't slow the momentum. Marc Maurer reported on the previous day's activities—picketing the MTA in Baltimore. Without consulting the blind, the MTA decided to put buzzers and beepers on the doors of the new subway cars, "so that the blind can find them." There was extensive coverage on radio, t.v., and in the press.

The morning session ended with an excellent presentation on Job Opportunities for the Blind. Panelists included a blind wine steward, a blind Spanish translator and a blind computer specialist.

A large part of the afternoon session was taken up with a discussion of the future of

services for the blind in Maryland. A bill is currently being studied which would establish a separate agency for the blind.

The afternoon session was capped off with an item called, "Meet the Candidates." Speakers included a candidate for governor, another who just wants to be a delegate but has been Speaker of the House in the past, and another who just wants to be a delegate for the first time—Marc Maurer, a Federationist known throughout the country. It is fair to say that Mr. Maurer conducted himself in such a manner as to make all Federationists proud.

The banquet was yet another highlight. The speaker for the evening was Jim Omvig. Dr. Jernigan presented the John McCraw Award to Willie J. Thompson for "his leadership, commitment and sacrifice on behalf of the blind of Maryland and the Nation." The members present pledged about \$2,400 for the treasury of the NFB of Maryland.

Sunday morning was highlighted by a rousing discussion with a representative from the Governor's office over services for the blind and the elections. The new officers are: President, Jim Omvig; First Vice-President, Marc Maurer; Second Vice-President, Althea Pittman; Secretary, David Robinson; Treasurer, Al Maneki; and Board Members Brenda Williams, Ted McKean, Jearl Conrad and Willie Thompson.

RECIPES

by Mary Ellen Anderson

(Note: Mrs. Anderson is the very capable Assistant to the President of the National Federation of the Blind. In that capacity she handles everything from administrative matters to the opening of the mail. She writes letters and articles, deals with government agencies, and helps conduct leadership seminars. As everyone who attends national conventions knows, she handles registration and convention arrangements and deals with hotels—but she also finds time to cook.)

HOT CRAB FONDUE

Ingredients: 5 ounce jar cheese whiz or similar sharp process cheese spread
8 ounce package cream cheese
flaked crab meat (7½ ounce can drained or up to 1 pound fresh—the more the better)
¼ cup cream or milk
½ teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
½ teaspoon cayenne pepper
1" square chunks French or whole wheat bread for dipping

Use double boiler or heavy sauce pan over low heat. Melt cheese spread and cream cheese together and blend until smooth. Add all remaining ingredients, stirring until well blended. Serve hot in a fondue pot or chafing dish. Add cream or milk from time to time if necessary to maintain desired consistency. *Do not omit or skimp on the cayenne pepper!* It is the secret of the recipe.

BAKED PINEAPPLE

Ingredients: 2½ pounds canned chunk pineapple (undrained)
1 cup melted butter
1½ cups sugar
¼ cup milk
3 beaten eggs
10 slices fresh bread broken into pieces

Mix all ingredients together in covered baking dish. Bake at 325 degrees for approximately one hour. The dish should be covered during baking except for the final 10 to 15 minutes to allow browning.

BRAN MUFFINS

Ingredients: 2 cups stone ground whole wheat flour
1½ cups bran
¾ teaspoon salt
1¼ teaspoon baking soda
2 tablespoons sugar
2 cups plain yogurt
1 egg lightly beaten
½ cup honey
2 tablespoons soft butter
1 cup raisins (optional)

1. Preheat oven to 425 degrees.
2. Combine dry ingredients in large bowl.
3. Beat together yogurt, egg, honey and butter in a second bowl. Fold in dry ingredients. Fold in raisins.
4. Fill oiled muffin tin 2/3 full and bake 15 to 20 minutes.

(Yield: approximately 2 dozen)

MONITOR MINIATURES □ □ □ □ □

□ Maureen C. Young writes:

“Body movement classes taught by a blind woman experienced in ballet stretch, aerobics and body building. Fully participate in work sessions. Replace the humiliation of feeling frustrated with the joy of being able to follow the instructor completely. Sixty-minute class on cassette \$25. Check or money order. New York City classes mid-town area \$15 per session or \$35 for private instruction. For more information write or call Maureen Carole Young, Manhattan Plaza, 484 West 43rd Street, Apt. 12-Q, New York, New York 10036. Telephone (212) 239-1474.”

□ From Kenneth Gould of New Jersey:

“I have started a small business (Audio Nexus) selling high quality audio equipment. Audio Nexus is a very special, very personal type of audio salon. We serve our customers on an appointment-only basis, and we only take one customer at a time. When you visit us, you have our undivided attention and the exclusive use of all our listening facilities. It occurred to me that there is a way I can build up business and benefit the Federation at the same time. I will contribute an amount of 10% of any sale made to a Federationist or through the NFB. For further information, or to set up

an appointment, write to me at: Audio Nexus, 92 Briarwood Drive, West, Berkeley Heights, New Jersey 07922; or telephone (201) 464-8238."

□ T-Shirts:

The Cambridge Chapter of the NFB is selling T-shirts with the NFB logo. In Braille above the logo is the word "blind," and in print below the logo is the word "pride." The shirts are white on black and royal blue on white, and come in Small, Medium, Large and Extra Large. Individuals may order the shirts at \$7.00 each plus .50 postage and handling. Chapters and state affiliates who wish to resell the shirts for fundraising purposes may buy them in quantity at special discounts: \$5.75 each for one to three dozen, \$5.25 each for four to six dozen and \$4.50 each for seven to ten dozen. The price for larger orders may be negotiated. In order to assist other Federationists' fundraising, the Cambridge Chapter is not charging for postage and handling on these quantity orders. Please remit in advance, by check payable to "Cambridge Chapter, NFBM," and allow four to six weeks for delivery. Send orders and information requests to David Ticchi, 321 Harvard Street, Cambridge, Mass. 02139. Don't forget to specify the color, quantity and size required and to enclose postage and handling if ordering as an individual.

□ Recipes Needed:

One of the more popular features in the *Monitor* each month is the recipe. We urge *Monitor* readers to share with us their favorite recipes. We would like to have something from every state and locality in the nation. Please send them.

□ Conducts Seminar:

The New York City Chapter of the National Federation of the Blind sponsored an intensive one-day seminar for blind and visually impaired students, for educators and school administrators, entitled: *The Blind or Visually Impaired Student in the 1980's: Objectives, Directions, Resources*. The seminar took place on Friday, October 29, 1982, at the Jewish Braille Institute of America, 110 East 30th Street, New York, New York. What level and quality of service should I expect from my rehabilitation counselor? Are there any sources of financial aid I haven't already thought of? How can I break the frustrating routine of always being rejected by employers? What creative strategies can I use for finding more readers? What level and quality of service should I expect from the Coordinator of Disabled Student Services on my campus? What accommodations to my blindness or visual impairment is it reasonable for me to expect from my professors? If I feel I have been discriminated against because of my disability, what rights do I have under the law? How can I make the most effective use of all the modern technological equipment which is now available to the blind and visually impaired? These are just some of the questions which the blind and visually impaired students, today, are asking themselves. The purpose of this intensive seminar was to present possible answers to these questions.

□ Sligo Creek Elections:

The Sligo Creek Chapter of the National Federation of the Blind of Maryland held its elections in June and chose as its new

officers and board members the following individuals: David Robinson, President; Lloyd Rasmussen, Vice President; Debbie Robinson, Secretary; Al Saile, Treasurer; and Board Members: Bobby Bobo, Steve Machalow, and Mark Plantz.

- ☐ Bay Area Chapter Elections:
The Bay Area Chapter of the National

Federation of the Blind Western Division held its annual election on September 11. The following officers were elected: Bruce Breslauer, President; Patricia Munson, First Vice President; LaVyr! Johnson, Second Vice President; Lief Johnson, Treasurer; Carolyn Truitt, Recording Secretary; and Mary Willows, Corresponding Secretary.

THE BRAILLE MONITOR

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